



State of Illinois
JB Pritzker, Governor



Illinois Department of Transportation
Omer Osman, Acting Secretary

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Fall driving can get risky when deer get frisky

Autumn ushers in peak season for deer vs. vehicle crashes

SPRINGFIELD – With the onset of autumn, the school year is in full swing, pumpkin lattes are steaming – and Illinois deer are feeling amorous. The Illinois Department of Transportation and Illinois Department of Natural Resources are reminding motorists to be vigilant during deer mating season as the animals become more active, especially in the early morning and evening hours.

“As the risk of deer-vehicle crashes peak during fall, drivers can help ensure they reach their destinations safely by remembering a few important tips,” said Acting Illinois Transportation Secretary Omer Osman. “Most importantly, don’t veer for deer. While your first instinct when facing a deer in the headlights may be to swerve, doing so could cause you to lose control of the vehicle and increase the severity of a crash.”

Motorists are urged to consider the following safe driving tips during deer mating season:

- Be aware of your surroundings and pay attention to deer crossing signs.
- Scan the sides of the road for eye shine – the reflection of headlights in the eyes.
- Slow down if you see deer. They travel in groups, so more are likely nearby.
- Prepare for the unexpected. Deer can stop in the middle of the road or double back.
- If a collision is inevitable, try to glance the vehicle off the deer and avoid swerving into the opposite lanes of traffic.

In 2018, there were 15,636 motor vehicle crashes involving deer in Illinois. Of these, 14,998 resulted in damage to property or vehicles only, while 630 caused personal injuries. Eight of the crashes were fatal.

More than 40% of crashes involving deer in Illinois occurred in October, November and December, with November being the highest-risk month. Rural environments were the site of nearly 90% of all crashes involving deer, with more than 70% occurring at twilight or nighttime.

The top 10 Illinois counties for crashes involving deer in 2018 were:

1. Cook	476	6. Fulton	331
2. Peoria	391	7. Williamson	315
3. Madison	377	8. Rock Island	310
4. Will	374	9. McHenry	308
5. Sangamon	360	10. Kane	307

“Deer-vehicle collisions can happen in any part of the state – urban or rural,” said IDNR Director Colleen Callahan. “If you do hit a deer, remember to report the accident to local law enforcement or a conservation police officer. They can help control traffic, clear the roadway or in the event that the animal must be euthanized.”

If you hit a deer, pull off to the shoulder and turn on the hazard lights. Call 911 to report the accident so law enforcement can assist. Do not get out of the vehicle to check on an injured deer or pull it from the road.

For more information on how to claim a deer that was involved in a crash, visit <http://bit.ly/DeerClaim>. To report possession of a deer killed in a deer-vehicle crash, fill out the form at <http://bit.ly/DeerPossession>.

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